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# Montana and the Sky



Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division

Vol. 46 No. 3

March 1995

## Another Successful Conference Becomes A Part of Montana Aviation History

The eleventh annual Montana Aviation Conference was attended by close to 600 aviation enthusiasts who gathered to participate and enjoy an exciting program. In spite of winter weather, the Conference held in Kalispell March 1-4, was a resounding success.

The kick-off luncheon on Thursday was attended by over 200 people who heard Penn Stohr, Evergreen International of McMinnville, Oregon, detail the incredible story of moving the "Spruce Goose" from Long Beach, California to McMinnville. Penn's slide presentation depicted the dismantling and complicated movement of the aircraft. A remarkable feat!

Over 40 exhibitors from across the U.S. and Canada brought displays for the trade show, filling the exhibit area. These firms also donated thousands of dollars worth of door prizes which were given away during the Conference. Many other generous sponsors contributed to events held at the Conference.

Concurrent session speakers shared a wide variety of knowledge and expertise with participants.

Dr. Jerry Cockrell graciously agreed to step in at the last minute as speaker at the Saturday luncheon when a medical emergency forced the cancellation of the appearance of Turner Gauntt. Dr. Cockrell also provided an entertaining session Thursday evening.



*Victor Belenko—A hit!*

Final highlight of the three days was the breathtaking presentation by Victor Belenko on his heroic venture for freedom when he escaped from Russia in a top secret MIG-25. Victor *certainly* made one

stop and remember how fortunate we are to reside in this "land of the free."

Special congratulations are extended to the Kalispell Conference Committee for all their hard work and dedication over the past 12 months.

The 1996 Montana Aviation Conference will be held February 28-March 2, 1996, at the Colonial Inn in Helena. Mark your calendar now!



*See photos on page 4.*

### **Thank You**

The Montana Chapter of the 99s would like to thank everyone at the MT Aviation Conference, who purchased raffle tickets to support the Esther Combes/Vance Verne Vine Memorial Scholarship. This year's fuel raffle was a huge success. Congratulations to Gordon Clare of Silver Star, winner of \$100 worth of fuel. Pat Lifo of Glendive was the winner of \$50 worth of fuel. A special thanks goes out to Pat who donated \$25 of his prize back to the MT 99s Scholarship.

Gail Sanchez-Eaton  
MT 99s Chairman

PLEASE RETURN

# Administrator's Column

**Aviation Trust Fund:** There is growing support in Congress to take the Aviation, Highway, Inland Waterway, and Harbor Maintenance user paid Trust Funds out of the Federal unified budget so that they can be spent for their respective purposes. In a bipartisan effort, Congressmen Norman Mineta and Bud Shuster have urged their colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 842, the Truth in Budgeting Act which will remove these trust funds from the general fund budget and put an end to what they cite as unethical and dishonest the manner in which these funds are now being mismanaged. They state that H.R. 842 will do two things:

- "(1) It restores integrity to the Trust Funds, which are self-financed, self-supporting funds directed towards specific needs. These Trust Funds do not contribute one dime to the deficit.
- (2) And, it restores integrity to the Federal budget, whose real deficits are masked by these Trust Funds."

\*\*\*\*\*

**FAA Changes Computer Testing Policy:** In response to the strong opposition from aviation organizations and individuals over the FAA's plan to implement "computer only" testing, FAA Administrator Hinson has announced that the FAA has revised their policy and will now allow FAR Part 141 flight schools having written testing authority to also become computer test centers and to allow special

test administrators in rural areas to give exams in written form. This will be done in areas where the volume of testing is inadequate to support computer test center standards. I expressed my opposing opinion about this in the November 1994 issue of *Montana and the Sky*, as well as in a letter to the FAA, so I am very pleased that the FAA has changed their policy which would have been a heavy burden on pilots living in rural America.

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**FCC Fee Reduction:** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is proposing a licensing fee reduction for aircraft radios and aviation radio ground stations. The proposed fee of aircraft is \$3 annually payable for ten years (\$30) and \$3 annually payable for five years (\$15) for aircraft radio ground stations. Sound good? I don't think so! **THE BIG KICKER IS THAT THE FCC ADDS A \$45 APPLICATION FEE FOR EACH MAKING THE TRUE FEE \$75 AND \$60 RESPECTIVELY.** Now if this makes any sense to you I'd sure like to have it explained to me. It provides absolutely nothing for anyone. Except maybe helps to fund an unnecessary bureaucratic function. Why aircraft radios? Why are the thousands (maybe millions) of CB and other communication radios exempt from FCC licensing? There is really no reason to require a license or have a fee at all.



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## Fly Fort Benton

Plan on attending Aviation Day, April 23 in Fort Benton. There will be coffee/donuts for the early birds with a barbecue beginning at 11:00 a.m. Static displays and a fun filled day will be enjoyed.



# New Full Service FBO at Helena

As of January 15, 1995, three Montana men have purchased Corporate Airs' assets in Helena and have reopened as WEST AIR, located at the southwest corner of the Helena Airport.

Mr. Dave Coon, known by many in aviation, is WEST AIR'S manager. Dave, who has owned and operated 3-D Aviation in Helena for several years, has brought 3-D under the same roof with WEST AIR.

Therefore, WEST AIR offers full FBO services, Conoco fuel, maintenance, aircraft charters, rentals, flight school, testing and lots of good friendly hangar talk.

We at WEST AIR are looking forward to serving the flying public.

The Aeronautics Division wishes Dave Coon and his partners best of luck and looks forward to doing business with WEST AIR.

# Cessna 170s are Coming to the Northwest

By: Ken Morrow

The International Cessna 170 Association will be holding their 1995 convention July 9-15 in Kalispell, MT, at the Outlaw Inn Convention Center. Hosted by the Cessna 170 state area representatives Terry Westphal, Kalispell, MT; Bob Irwin, Calgary, Alberta, Canada; and Ken Morrow, Nampa, ID. We are expecting over 100 Cessna 170 aircraft and approximately 350 people from all over the United States, Alaska, Canada, and even a group of our international members from Australia will be coming.

This beautiful area of Kalispell and Glacier Park was presented to our International Cessna 170 Association Board of Directors for approval three years ago. With their gracious blessing, it was approved for the 1995 convention site. The Montana State Aeronautics and Idaho State Aeronautics were contacted about the proposed convention and their directors Mike Ferguson and Bill Cooper offered support.

The last Cessna 170 Convention that was held in the northwest lower 48 states, was at Portland, OR, in 1981-14 years ago. As host members we are excited about bringing this event back to the northwest. A welcoming committee will greet all arriving

aircraft and members to the Upper Flathead Valley and Kalispell area. A week full of activities, meetings, tours of Big Mountain and Glacier Park are scheduled.

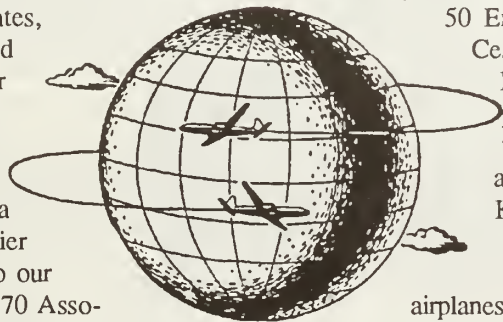
As of press time, we found out that the Ercoupe Aircraft Association has moved its convention dates. Yes, their dates are now the week before the Cessna 170 Association—so

if you want to see approximately 50 Ercoupes and arriving Cessna 170's at the Kalispell City Airport, come and enjoy the aircraft activities, along with the city of Kalispell. There will be two weeks of airplanes, airplanes, airplanes, invading this beautiful area and community.

Speaking for the International Cessna 170 Association, to be a member you do not have to own a Cessna 170 to join. We'll still take your money!!

So this summer come to the beautiful Flathead area and join us for a wonderful time and meet some real tail wheel pilots.

Hotels/motels are hard to come by in the summer so make reservations early. For more information call Ken Morrow 208-466-1793 or Terry Westphal 406-257-4004.



# Calendar

**March 1 - 4**—Montana Aviation Conference, Kalispell.

**March 5**—INAC Board of Directors Meeting, Kalispell.

**March 5 - 8**—Upper Midwest Aviation Symposium, Bismarck, North Dakota.

**March 25**—Beartooth Composite Squadron Cadet Orientation Flights, Laurel Airport, call 238-7405.

**April 23**—Aviation Day, Fort Benton.

**April 29**—SAR Refresher Clinic, Gallatin Field, Belgrade.

**May 27 - 29**—Benchmark Annual Work Session.

**June 2 - 4**—Shelby Fly-in and Air Show.

**June 10**—International Young Eagles Day.

**June 19 - 30**—Aviation Education Teacher Workshop, University of Montana, Missoula.

**June 19 - 30**—Aerospace Camp, University of Montana, Missoula.

**June 22 - 25**—Women's Air Race Classic.

**June 24**—Plains Fly-in and Air Show, contact Randy Garrison at 826-3605.

**July 5 - 8**—Ercoupe Annual Convention, Kalispell, MT.

**July 8 - 9**—Big Sky Alive '95 Air Show, Missoula.

**July 9 - 15**—27th Annual International Cessna Association Convention, Kalispell, MT. Ken Morrow 208-466-1793 or Terry Westphal 406-257-4004.

**July 14 - 16**—Schafer Meadows Annual Work Session.

**July 20 - 23**—Annual Family Fly-in and Flight Safety Expo, Helena.

**August 3 - 6**—MAAA Fly-in, Three Forks.

**August 20 - Air Show**, Gallatin Field, Belgrade.

**September 2 - 4 - Annual Labor Day Fly-in**, West Yellowstone.

# 1995 Montana Aviation Conference



Bill Truax, Kalispell Conference Chairman (left) and Lt. Governor Dennis Rehberg (right) welcome participants to the 1995 Conference and the Flathead Valley. Lt. Governor Rehberg was praised by the Montana Aviation Community for his continued dedication and commitment to aviation. In his honor, the airway beacon located north of Helena near the Sleeping Giant Mountain was renamed "The Rehberg Beacon".

Above, Penn Stohr brings back memories speaking of his career at Johnson Flying Service and flying the Ford Tri-Motor.



Doug Parrott, retired Northwest Airlines Captain, shares a humorous story and draws the lucky winner of a round-trip ticket on Northwest.....Jim Stroh of Havre.



Larry Andriesen, Deputy Regional Administrator, FAA, presented JoAnn Eisenzimer with an FAA Recognition Award recognizing her commitment and devotion to aviation education.



Activity at the registration desk wasn't always this easy—Jack Archibald, Joann Archibald and Patty Kautz take a break and enjoy the peace and quiet.



Frank Gurko, Champion Aviation Products; Cookie McNamara, Edmo Distributors, Spokane; and Par Loennquist, Edmo Distributors, California; attend the exhibitor meeting prior to the display area officially opening.

## Watch for more photos in next issue of *Montana and the Sky*



Exhibitors from across the country and Canada participated in the trade show. Morning and afternoon refreshment breaks, Friday's lunch and a hospitality hour Friday evening were all held in the exhibit area. Door prize drawings were conducted for many gifts donated by the exhibitors and others.



Nancy Trudell, Manager, Helena FSDO, FAA, conducted an FAA Question and Answer Session during the aviation mechanic's refresher seminar.



Ben Visser, Shell Oil, together with many other industry representatives presented sessions at the Division's mechanic refresher, IA renewal seminar.



Dr. Jerry Cockrell of Anchorage, Alaska and Dave Sclair, General Aviation News & Flyer of Tacoma, WA, stop to visit with Wilma Fleming, Flight Products International, Kalispell.



The mechanic seminar saw record attendance this year with over 100 mechanics participating.

# AMAA Conducts Annual Meeting

The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators (AMAA) held its annual meeting, January 24 in Great Falls. The annual meeting preceded a Pesticide Recertification Workshop and the Montana Agricultural Business Association's Convention.

Worker Protection Standards training was conducted with three recertification credits given to those in attendance. Other industry sessions were offered together with a legislative update.

Ag aviation exhibitors had an opportunity to participate in the trade show, displaying the latest products/services available.

The meeting concluded with AMAA's annual banquet. Jim Heppner of Dutton was elected President for 1995; Darrold Hutchison, Vice-President; and Andy Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer. These officers are joined by the Board of Directors which include: Buck Buchanan, Glen Carlson, Boyd Morgan, Mike Biggerstaff, Jerry



*Outgoing President Mike Biggerstaff (left) conducts business during the annual board meeting. Pictured with Mike is President-elect Jim Heppner (center) and Andy Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer (right).*

Weibert, and Don Newton. Joel Fenger serves as AMAA's representative on the Montana Aeronautics Board.

## Welcome!

I am extremely pleased to be working with the folks at the Montana Aeronautics Division and with you my fellow Montana pilots. My biggest asset to you is my love and dedication to aviation; in 1994, I was awarded a scholarship —A Love of Aviation— in recognition of academic achievement in Aviation Education.

I have been a flight instructor in both the Anaconda and Helena areas with students ranging in age from 14 to 70. My first student to become a private pilot is now the editor of *Cessna* and *Piper* magazines.

I have been a Montana Search Pilot and a Search Observer for the Montana Aeronautics Division, and have attended the Division's Montana Mountain Search Pilot Clinic.

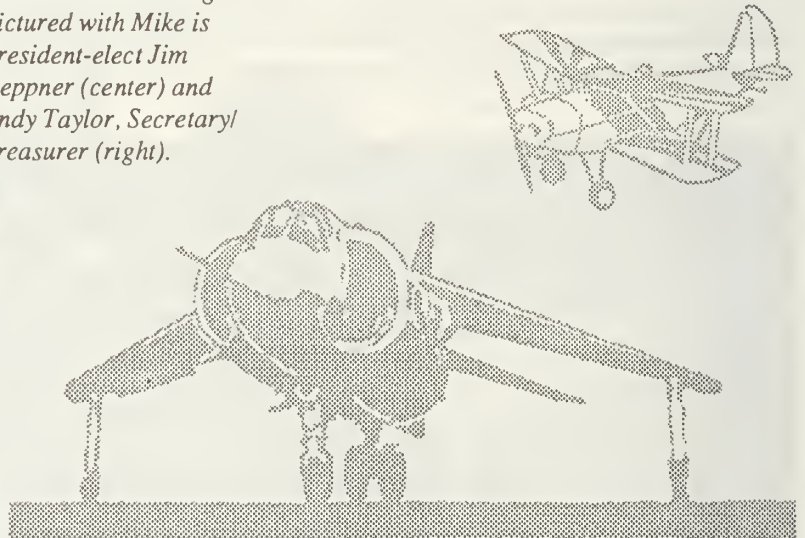
My education was obtained through a Professional Flight Degree from Dixie College in Saint George, Utah. Further, I have a teaching/coaching background in the arts and recreational fields.

My aviation highlights include: a trip around the U.S. in a Cessna 182 and flying freight (bank checks) in southwestern, northwestern and eastern Montana.

My kick-off start will be conducting Search Pilot Refresher Courses throughout the 14 Montana SAR Districts beginning April 29 in Bozeman.

Tailwinds to you!

Jeanne Lesnik



# FAA's Contracting Out Plan for Helena and Missoula Towers Raises Safety Questions

By: Randy Kienitz  
NATCA Representative  
(406) 442-8482

While the FAA begins to take much needed steps toward improving commuter air safety, it's plan to contract out Helena and Missoula air traffic control towers and over 100 others will effectively lower safety margins, according to the union representing this nations 15,000 air traffic controllers.

In a process already under way, rigorously-trained FAA controllers at Level 1 airport towers, including those at Helena and Missoula towers, are scheduled for replacement by less qualified contract employees. These facilities are used largely by commuter and general aviation traffic. This measure is a first step toward reducing service and possible full tower closure by 1997, despite the vital links they provide to other markets nationwide.

As a result, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NACTA) has asked the FAA to place the safety interests of those who use the Helena and Missoula airports above all other considerations by halting this short sighted contracting out plan.

FAA controllers are better prepared to serve the safety interests of the flying public in many respects. For example: **Training**—FAA controllers experience exhaustive training at its Academy and up to a year of training once assigned to a facility. As a result, the FAA's air traffic control work force is one of the most well trained in the world. By comparison, contract controllers receive only three to six weeks of training. For example, when the Hagerstown, MD tower was contracted out on October 16, 1994, four controllers with a total on-the-job experience of eight days took the place of nine FAA controllers with an average of four years apiece.

**Qualifications**—Apparently, the FAA considers its own controllers better qualified than contracted ones. Case in point: When the president flies to Martha's Vineyard, which has a contracted air traffic control tower, the FAA finds it necessary to bring in FAA controllers to oversee the work of the contracted employees.

**Age Restrictions**—Congress and the FAA have recognized that being an air traffic controller is a job for a young and vigorous workforce. Accordingly, FAA controllers may not be hired after the age of 30 and are subject to mandatory retirement at the age of 55 due to the extraordinarily high stress factor associated with the job. However, contract controllers are currently being hired well into their 50's and even 60's.

**Time-on-Position Restrictions**—FAA controllers are contractually restricted to two hours on position to ensure maximum alertness. Yet, contract controllers may be

required to work as many as eight hours without a break.

**Refresher Training**—FAA controllers receive monthly refresher and proficiency training, while contract controllers are not required to receive any.

**Staffing Levels**—Level 1 facility staffing requires a minimum rotation of seven controllers to safely work traffic, allowing for rest periods, vacation, and sick leave. However, contract towers will be allowed to operate with a rotation of only four controllers, adding even greater stress to those on duty.

## Aeronautics Board Approves Grants and Loans

The Montana Aeronautics Board at their March 4th meeting at the Montana Aviation Conference in Kalispell approved the following projects and disbursements from the Aeronautics Grant and Loan Program. The Aeronautics Division re-established these programs in 1993 as a result of legislation sponsored by the Montana Pilots Association. Although this grant and loan program is small when compared to most other states, the Board and the Division make every effort to maximize their intended effect to promote Montana aviation and airport development.

Airports receiving Aeronautics grants and loans are:

**COLUMBUS**—grant in the amount of \$52,210. Funds are being used in combination with Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and local monies for land acquisition, runway, taxiway, and apron improvements, new medium intensity light system (MIRL) and fencing.

**DEER LODGE**—grant in the amount of \$10,000 and a loan for \$10,000. Funds are being used in combination with AIP and local monies for the rehabilitation of Runway 12/30 and

turnarounds, and rehabilitation of existing taxiway and apron.

**FT. BENTON**—Preliminary Engineering Grant (PEG) in the amount of \$1,000 for survey work preparatory to an AIP project.

**LAUREL**—grant in the amount of \$2,080. Funds are being used in combination with AIP and local monies to update the Airport Master Plan, Airport Layout Plan and an Environmental Assessment.

**SCOBAY**—loan in the amount of \$30,000 for the installation of new underground storage tanks for AVGAS fuel dispensing.

**THOMPSON FALLS**—grant in the amount of \$16,500 and loan for \$16,500. Funds are being used in combination with AIP and local monies to purchase additional land, rehabilitation of runway 7/25, apron, and construction of parallel taxiway. Lighting improvements include rehabilitation of existing MIRL, modify VASI runway 25 and new PAPI runway 7.

**TURNER**—grant in the amount of \$30,834. Funds are being used in combination with AIP and local monies to reconstruct runway 6/24, taxiway, and apron as well as update the Airport Layout Plan.

## **SAR Refresher Clinics**

Montana Aeronautics will be conducting refresher Search and Rescue Clinics throughout Montana's 14 districts. The clinics will cover the air search procedures, and a review of the E.L.T. principles of operation.

The first refresher clinic will be with District #11, Linda Marshall, Search Coordinator, Belgrade, MT.

Date: April 29, 1995 (Saturday)  
Place: Arlin's, Gallatin Field, Belgrade, MT  
Time: 0900 - 1300 local time  
Coordinators: Montana Aeronautics Division Search & Rescue

This clinic is for all search coordinators and search volunteers.

## **SPRING THAW**

By: James R. Greil  
Aviation Support Officer

Despite the yo-yo weather we have gone through over the past couple of months, it would appear that spring has finally arrived. With the warmer temperatures and longer days, the standing snow has now turned to standing slush and potential mud pits now loom with the impending spring rains. Always use good soft-field take-off and landing procedures when maneuvering on wet air fields, and if an alternate airfield can be used, by all means, please do.

If while taxiing, taking off or landing you happen to put large ruts in the surface of the airstrip, please call the airport manager to notify him or her so that the next pilot isn't given a rut-of-a-kind surprise. This is also a good time to remind you that vehicular travel on soggy runways is quite damaging, expensive, and time consuming to correct. Please do not drive on the runway to test the surface condition.

Safe and Fun Flying

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